

Kids' Land DayCare

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Joint Legislative Committee

My name is Tama Beeson and I have been a licensed group childcare provider since 1985. I am a member of the National Association for Family Child Care, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Mi Association for the Education of Young Children, a board member of the Michigan Providers' Alliance and have been serving on the Advisory Committee that is writing the Technical Assistance for the proposed changes in the family and group home child care rules. I whole heartedly support these revisions and feel that they should have been done a long time ago.

I, in no way feel that these proposed changes make us too much like a center. These changes are for the health and welfare of all of Michigan's children whether they receive care in a center based program or a home based program. Children, no matter where they spend their days, deserve to be happy, healthy, and safe. Some rules have no choice but to be universal.

A great deal of the comments I have heard opposing the revisions come from providers as well as community members that do not understand what they are reading. The legal language can be confusing and that is why we have spent the past 6 months (and about the next 6 months) writing Technical Assistance to go along with them that each and every registered/licensed provider in Michigan will receive. One of the major problems has been that the licensing consultant and the provider have been interpreting the rule differently. These TA's will put the provider and the consultant on "the same page".

More training is also a huge issue. I personally had 147 hours of training last year. Most of which, cost me nothing. I recently attended a training seminar in Higgan's Lake that was sponsored by Central Michigan 4C. Not only was the training free of charge, so was two night lodging and all meals. What more could I ask for? I have also attended several other trainings that paid for all of these as well as reimbursement for mileage and a substitute when the trainings were held on a weekday. Even after being in this business for almost 20 years, I learn something new every time I attend trainings or a conference. I also am

able to share my expertise and experiences with other providers. This can be invaluable to a new provider.

Another issue is the playground. Yes, it may seem strict and much like a center but why should a child that is at a home childcare, be less protected than a child at a center. Kids are kids. They will fall and they will get hurt however, it is our job as adults to protect them the best we can and if that means having a 6 foot fall zone, so be it. If you don't have room in your yard for that, then provide things that do not require a fall zone like a ground level playhouse, riding toys, sandbox, sand and water table, dolls, cars, balls etc. It is not required that you have a swing set or a climbing structure.

Yes some of the "rules" are things that should be the responsibility of the parent, but let's face it, not all parents live up to their responsibilities.

The children of Michigan are our most precious asset. We need to nurture them, stimulate them, protect them and celebrate them. That is what these proposed revisions do. Please do not take that away from them.

Thank you for your time,
Tama Beeson
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